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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0611

INFO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE 1035

RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 6194

RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE 0047

RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE 0673

RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA IMMEDIATE 0463

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 002073

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV UNSC AG MO WI

SUBJECT: UNSC: SECURITY COUNCIL RENEWS MINURSO FOR SIX MONTHS

REF: STATE 180405

¶11. The Security Council October 31 extended the MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) mandate for a further six months to April 30, 2007. UNSCR 1720 (2006), based on a draft text developed and sponsored by Friends of Western Sahara (U.S., UK, France, Russia and Spain), passed by a 15-0 vote. With the exception of a new preambular paragraph expressing support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, the text closely tracked the text of the April 2006 renewal resolution.

¶12. Three Council members -- U.S., UK and France -- delivered explanations of vote (EOVs). Speaking first, U.S. Political Minister-Counselor Brencick said that the United States voted for the resolution with the understanding that all parties would utilize the coming six months to aggressively negotiate a mutually acceptable solution that brings peace, stability and economic prosperity to the region in a manner consistent with the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. The United States further called for all parties to engage the UN and each other in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. We urged Morocco to move quickly to fulfill its many promises to table a comprehensive and credible autonomy proposal for the Western Sahara, and to engage in discussions, without preconditions, with all Sahrawi people, including the Polisario. In calling for Morocco, Algeria and the Polisario to move beyond rhetoric to the serious work needed for resolution of this conflict, Brencick conveyed the U.S. view that MINURSO is not a viable alternative to a permanent solution. Finally, Brencick relayed the U.S. request to the Secretary-General to examine mechanisms and a timetable for dismantlement of MINURSO should it continue to prove ineffective in fulfilling its mandate, or should the parties prove unable to make substantial progress towards a political solution.

¶13. In its EOV, UK DPR Pierce, noting that the resolution was a technical rollover, highlighted three aspects of the Western Sahara situation the UK considers to be important: the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Personal Envoy to find a way forward; the reference to the human rights situation in the Secretary-General's report, a reference which calls for continuing monitoring of human rights in Western Sahara; and a reiteration of the UK's desire to see progress beyond the current impasse in the next six months. In its EOV, France noted positively Morocco's intention to submit an autonomy proposal in the coming months and expressed its support for the work of the Secretary-General and the Personal Envoy.

¶14. Text of UNSC resolution 1720 follows:

Begin Text:
The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on Western Sahara, including resolution 1495 (2003) of 31 July 2003, resolution 1541 (2004) of 29 April 2004, and resolution 1675 (2006) of 28 April 2006.

Reaffirming its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy;

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Reaffirming its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect,

Reiterating its call upon the parties and States of the region to continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations to end the current impasse and to achieve progress towards a political solution,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 16 October 2006 (S/2006/817),

¶1. Reaffirms the need for full respect of the military agreements reached with MINURSO with regard to the cease-fire;

¶2. Calls on Member States to consider voluntary contributions to fund Confidence Building Measures that allow for increased contact between separated family members, especially family unification visits;

¶3. Requests the Secretary-General provide a report on the situation in the Western Sahara before the end of the mandate period;

¶4. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to ensure full compliance in MINURSO with the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council informed, and urges troop-contributing countries to take appropriate preventive action including pre-deployment awareness training, and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

¶5. Decides to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2007;

¶6. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

End Text

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